

Courtesy of: Kyodo/ The Japan Times

South Korea to launch ‘comfort women’ committee Tuesday

SEOUL – The fund to help Korean former “comfort women” will come a step closer to existence Tuesday, when a team is set up to lay groundwork, the South Korean Foreign Ministry said Monday.

The fund was agreed to in a landmark deal between Japan and South Korea on Dec. 28 to resolve the issue “finally and irreversibly.” The fund is expected to be set up in late June.

The agreement mandated an apology by Japan and a pledge of ¥1 billion for a foundation that the South Korean government will administer.

It is reported that the preparatory committee will comprise around 10 experts, including officials from South Korea’s Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Gender Equality and Family.

Kim Tae-hyun, an honorary professor at Sungshin Women’s University in Seoul, is often cited as a candidate to head the committee. It is thought that the committee’s chief will go on to head the foundation itself.

So-called comfort women were women and girls coerced into serving at Imperial Japanese military brothels. Survivors are now elderly and many have died.

The bilateral deal has been criticized by some of the victims, as well as activists and opposition parties, who have called on the Japanese government to admit legal responsibility for compensation.

The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese colonial rule between 1910 and 1945.